THE PROCESS FOR DEVELOPING GOALS AND TARGETS FOR ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION

Purpose:

This paper describes the proposed process for setting goals and targets for the CALFED Bay-Delta Ecosystem Restoration Program.

Approach:

Stakeholders, interest groups, and agency representatives have been working for some time to establish the foundation for the Ecosystem Restoration Common Program. Through public workshops, they have identified the problems to be addressed, and set the objectives to be pursued. Together, they have agreed that restoration to a healthy ecosystem is the mission, and that an ecosystem approach-- based on habitat restoration, critical instream flow management, and ecosystem function maintenance-- are the appropriate means to accomplish the mission.

Workshops were held by stakeholders to discuss and define indicators of ecological integrity. These indicators will provide for the measurement of progress toward the component goals of the program. An extensive literature review concluded that habitat reconstruction and rehabilitation can be accomplished, and that a broad-based program can produce a measurable response from target species or communities of plants and animals.

The steps described above have led to an Ecosystem Restoration Strategy Outline. The strategy paper adds a Vision Statement to the process. This vision is the picture of what we want the Bay-Delta ecosystem to look like when we have accomplished our mission. The restoration of ecosystem health is our Qualitative Vision.

The next step in the process is to develop a quantitative vision. The BDAC Ecosystem Restoration Work Group has been set up as an advisory panel to CALFED. The Work Group has been presented with and discussed several approaches to setting targets for a quantitative vision. These include: evaluation of pre-disturbance conditions and processes, the use of diagnostic goals and prescriptive actions to manipulate controlling factors which limit ecosystem products, and the use of a recent historical reference period. A period can be used to quantify ecosystem products such as populations, ecosystem conditions such as acres of habitat, and ecosystem functions such as nutrient input. Complementary to these approaches is the suggestion that declines in the fish populations over the last 1/3 of a century is the problem which necessitated the CALFED effort. An identification of the probable causes of these declines could lead to the most effective prescription for restoration of balance between competing uses.

CALFED staff will synthesize the comments and discussions of the BDAC Ecosystem Restoration Work Group for presentation to the CALFED Program Coordination Team and the CALFED Management Team. This process is illustrated in the attached flow diagram.

Staff and consultants will develop draft targets and the rationale for those targets. The draft targets paper should be available for agency, work group, and public review in early September.